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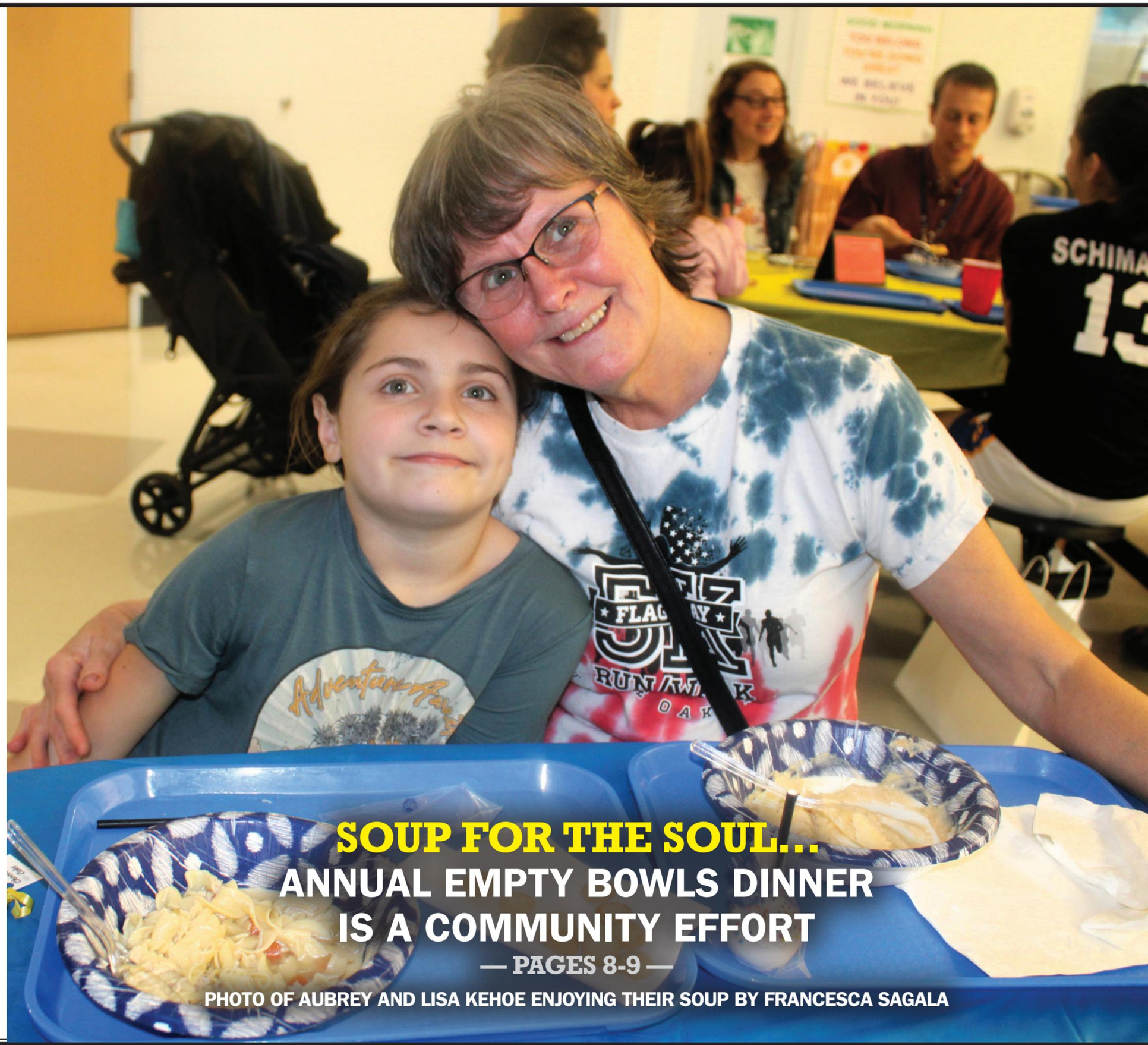

SOUP FOR THE SOUL...
ANNUAL EMPTY BOWLS DINNER IS A COMMUNITY EFFORT

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PHOTO OF AUBREY AND LISA KEHOE ENJOYING THEIR SOUP BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

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NATO

BY MARK ANDERSON

Americans' support for continued assistance to Ukraine—economic as well as military aid—is waning, according to a new survey. But ironically, Democrats are the holdouts, despite the Democratic Party's traditional pro-peace worldview.

This survey, conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA), compares responses from republicans, democrats as well as independents. It shows that those who identify as democrats are the most zealous to keep pumping billions of U.S. dollars into Ukraine.

From March 2022 when the Russia-Ukraine conflict started (85% of those surveyed approved) until February 2024 (78% approved), Democrat respondents (with past CCGA surveys included for continuity) maintained the highest level of approval for such economic aid.

Republicans' support dropped most sharply, from 74% supporting economic aid in March 2022 down to 40% in Feb. 2024. Independents went from 75% to 54%.

As for sending U.S. arms to Ukraine, Dems went from 83% to 75% in the same time period; republicans, 80% to 45%; independents, 79% to 54%.

Interestingly, Democrats are most supportive of sending U.S. troops into the Ukraine-Russian conflict. Democrats' support to send U.S. troops there went from 42% to 35%; republicans, from 34% to 21%; independents, from 33% to 26%.

Clearly, public support is dropping regarding any kind of Ukraine aid. It's just that the Dems have maintained the most support.

This survey of 1,039 voting-age adults was conducted with the help of the Lester Crown Center on U.S. Foreign Policy, an institution within the CCGA. The research firm IPSOS took part, too. Lester Crown is the son of the late Henry Crown, founder of General Dynamics, a major defense contractor. CCGA CEO Ivo Daalder is a former U.S. envoy to NATO.

So while the survey suggests that republicans have traded places with the dems as being the peace party—an interesting development, given the worshipful view most republicans have of the military—another intriguing twist is that there is strong support across the board for Ukraine to join NATO. But only the Dems' support actually went up, from 80% to 83%, from March 2022 to Feb. 2024.

But if you're a NATO member, an attack on one member is an attack on all, meaning that if Ukraine joins NATO, the U.S. would be obliged to enter the conflict versus Russia; yet, the republicans and independents surveyed gave a resounding "NO" to the U.S. directly committing troops to Ukraine under its current non-NATO status.

The CCGA claims this disparity arises from general public ignorance of how NATO works. Yet, the "take away" here is that the clear intent to make Ukraine a full NATO member could bring World War III with it.

Thus, the time for serious reflection is now. It might be wise to deny Ukraine full NATO membership to avoid a wider war—a war that would be immensely profitable to the defense industry if the U.S. were to directly involve itself.

Is there a potential conflict of interest, given the Crown family's background and its involvement in this survey? Is Mr. Daalders' NATO background an issue? You be the judge. The stakes are high.

Old scam keeps racking up victims

BY STAN MADDUX

An elderly La Porte County man was scammed after being told during a phone call that he won close to $1 million and a brand new vehicle.

According to La Porte County Police, the 75-year-old victim reported he was contacted March 2 by a man claiming to be with Publishers Clearing House.

Police said the caller informed him he won $980,000 and a 2024 GMC truck from the company long known for its sweepstakes and other prize-based games.

To collect, the victim was instructed to purchase a $300 gift card and provide him with the numbers off the card to cover processing fees associated with his alleged winnings.

Police said the man drove to a pharmacy in New Carlisle and bought the gift card. When he returned home, he gave the caller the numbers off the piece of plastic.

After the caller removed the funds off the card, he told the victim to expect delivery of his prizes two days later and to have $500 in cash to give to the driver making the delivery to cover his operating costs, police said.

That's when the victim realized it was a scam and contacted the sheriff's office.

The soul is the most powerful thing on earth ...
— Dino N. Fatouros

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

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CITY COUNCIL
MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJESKI, JOHN HUMPHREY, BRIAN FLANAGAN, VANCE PRICE
City Council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
PETE RAHM, MICHELLE HEIT, MICHELLE HANNON, PATTY IAZZETTO, JACK ROGERS
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 10AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS, DENISE CHURCHILL, BRADLEY BURNER, VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY, GREG VOSBERG
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, BILL MARSKE
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM

VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday October thru March at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER BLAKE O'HALLORAN, JAMES BRACEWELL, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES
MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

Recreation Authority approves baseball and softball field lease agreements

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Members of the New Buffalo Area Recreation Authority (NBARA) approved a lease agreement for the Oselka Park baseball and softball field at a special meeting Wednesday, Feb. 28, at New Buffalo Township Hall.

That Monday, the city had approved an Oselka Park Softball Field Lease Agreement with NBARA at a special meeting. Later that evening, the New Buffalo Area Schools Board of Education had approved leasing the baseball field to the NBARA.

New Buffalo Area Schools Superintendent Adam Bowen, who's one of the school district's representatives on the authority, said that the school district's law firm, Thrun, had advised that they only need a 20-year agreement, while the city's is a 50-year one.

He also noted Section 4b in the agreement, which states that the "Authority shall cause the improvements to be constructed and installed at nominal cost to the District."

"But we're going into this knowing we have to put some money into it and we're okay with that - especially because it's going to have to have our board approve that," Bowen said.

Treasurer Pano Arvaniti, the other district representative, said that the NBARA has received estimates from Skillman Corporation and Abonmarche regarding the fields' improvements.

NBARA will start working with Abonmarche to submit grant applications for the improvements, with the deadline for grant submissions being April 1.

Members also authorized setting up an account with MIGrants with the NBARA.

Steve Ruby, landscape architect/project manager at Abonmarche, said that he met with the school three or four weeks ago to discuss what could be put into place at the fields and the design aspects.

"Looking at the shoot for the moon approach, we discussed different variables that would go into this: New dugouts potentially, new fence and new field surface itself, making them universal for both softball and baseball - kind of provide the flexible field itself," he said.

A scoreboard and bleachers were other amenities that were discussed, along with ball pens and batting cages.

Ruby added that what's in the survey still needs to be vetted out, such as with regards to what's on the land as far as utilities are concerned.

Bowen said that how to remove a platted road that's between the middle/high school parking lot and the baseball field that goes right where the fence is located is also being investigated.

Ruby said that they looked at many of the school's parcels and that one of the items that might be dealt with "outside of this scope of contract" would be assessing what it would take to merge that altogether to one piece of property. Cleaning up the easements, which Ruby said that they believe is just a vacated right of way, is another potential goal.

Bowen said the baseball field is kind of tilted, causing the foul line to go toward the track, and that the "dugout butts up against the track."

"So we want some separation away from the track - so in order to do that, we kind of need to eat into almost our parking lot and then turn the field just a little bit but where home plate is right now is the best position for that," he said.

Ruby said that reorienting the field "so it's more true north south orientation with the left field foul line" will also give extra space and "flexibility" with regards to field improvements.

A walking path and extra amenities would be designed in and around the baseball field.

Arvantis said that this is merely the "first step" to get NBARA into the game to see what's out there in terms of grants.

"There's still a design phase, there's an engineering phase - all kinds of things that will go back to us and to our two entities," he said.

Members approved Rick Novak as being the member-at-large.

We are so accustomed to disguise ourselves to others that in the end we become disguised to ourselves. *— Francois de La Rochefoucauld*

INFORMATIONAL SESSION TO PROVIDE UPDATE ON RED ARROW HIGHWAY 2024 ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Berrien County Road Department will be holding an informational session and construction schedule update for the Red Arrow Highway improvement project from US-12 to Community Hall Road from 6-7:30 p.m. Monday, March 11, at New Buffalo Township Hall.

Representatives from the road department will provide a project update as well as answer any questions related to the project. Meeting topics will include the four lane to three lane road reconfiguration design, the non-motorized trail, the 2024 anticipated project schedule, the project's impacts on traffic and more. Currently, the construction schedule anticipates the project beginning in late winter or early spring this year. The project will require road closure to thru traffic during drainage and road reconstruction phases.

Accommodations can be made for persons with disabilities and limited English-speaking ability. To make a request, contact the road department at 269-925-1196 extension 4410 or at info@bcroad.org at least seven days before the meeting.

New Buffalo Township Hall is located at 17425 Red Arrow Highway in New Buffalo. — STAFF REPORTS

MHS creates calmer kennels for shelter dogs

Life has been much calmer for the kenneled dogs at Michiana Humane Society (MHS).

Now, visitors are matched individually with shelter dogs in a private room or outside. The kennel area will be for staff and volunteers only.

"Our goal is to reduce the stress our dogs experience. We want to make meeting potential adopters a happy time for the dogs, and we want to make sure that the family and the dog are a good match," Calli Beal, MHS behavior coordinator, said.

"Some of our dogs don't show well in their kennels, but are awesome one-on-one with people. This will give them a better chance at a perfect match," she added.

While walk-ins are welcome, visitors are encouraged to make an appointment in advance to meet a dog or dogs. Whether you know which dog you want to meet or you are "just browsing," MHS' designated adoption counselors will be happy to spend a few minutes getting to know how you want a dog to fit into your life and making suggestions on who you should meet. Visitors can also browse through adoptable dogs on MHS' website while sitting in the lobby.

Once a dog is agreed upon, a handler will bring them to meet the people in the visiting room or in an outdoor pen. Feel free to spend some time together and, if you're ready, fill out an application for adoption. Generally, you'll be asked to call the next day to get the decision on your application but, if time allows, a same-day adoption may be possible.

"This is a big change for Michiana Humane Society," said Johanna Humbert, MHS executive director. "In the past, we have encouraged people to walk through the kennels. But just like shelters all over the country, our kennels have been full for the past couple of years. The stress level really zooms up when over 20 dogs start barking every time a person enters the kennels. Then visitors see the dogs all hyped up and say 'I couldn't live with that!'...It's not a true picture of how so many of our dogs will behave once in a nice home. We are hopeful that this change will give the dogs a better chance of going home soon."

Anyone interested in adopting at Michiana Humane Society is encouraged to visit MHS's website, MichianaPets.org. Call 219-872-4499 to make an appointment to meet dogs. The cat and critter adoption rooms remain open for browsing at this time.

Michiana Humane Society, Inc. places over 800 dogs, cats and small mammals each year. It is located at 722 Indiana Hwy. 212 in Michigan City. MHS' work is funded 100% by donations and fees. — STAFF REPORTS

Orders being accepted for tree, shrub seedling fundraiser

Orders are now being accepted for the Berrien County Conservation District's annual Tree and Shrub spring fundraiser sale.

A variety of bare root seedlings of evergreens, deciduous trees, shrubs and fruit trees are being offered along with strawberry, asparagus and horseradish starts. Dune grass, rain barrels, composters and other items are also available.

Orders may be placed at www.berriencd.org. Order forms may be printed from the website, or you may request one to be mailed to you by calling 269-471-9111 ext. 3. Orders are due by April 12. Quantities are limited. — STAFF REPORTS

Herbal medicine and the kitchen to be featured at garden club meeting

The River Valley Garden Club's Tuesday, March 19, meeting will feature Karen Hardin Edwards, a holistic educator.

Participants will learn how to create home remedies from ingredients they probably already have at home. The meeting is open to the public and starts at 1 p.m., with the presentation starting at 2 p.m., at the Harbert Community Church at the corner of Three Oaks and Harbert roads in Sawyer.

Starting new plants for the annual garden club plant sale for the May 18 plant sale will also be discussed. The sale is a great kickoff to spring and provides an opportunity for potential members to see members in action.

Anyone with an interest in gardening is always welcome at the River Valley Garden Club. The club has field trips, guest speakers, a member's plant auction and hands-on workshops in addition to the annual plant sale. The club is also involved in service projects throughout the year. Members come from Indiana and throughout southwest Michigan.

For more information contact Elizabeth Palulis at 269-426-3513 or evpalulis@yahoo.com. Visit the club's website at www.rivervalleygardenclub.org. — STAFF REPORTS

La Porte grappling with declining school enrollment

BY STAN MADDUX

With no apparent end to declining enrollment in sight, the La Porte School Corporation has begun taking a look at the possibility of closing schools and cutting staff.

Interim Superintendent Dr. Peggy Hinckley said some type of action is needed while the corporation is still in good financial shape.

She said gradual yearly enrollment decline has added up to where the money lost per student is now eating into the surplus dollars.

Hinckley, who took over as interim superintendent last month, said the budget surplus has dropped from $10.5 million to $7.3 million since 2019 because nothing has been done to offset the loss in revenue caused by the dropping student head count.

"We just continued to lose cash balance and that's not a responsible fiscal position to take," she said.

A study by South Carolina based McKibben Demographic Research shows the number of students in the school corporation has dropped by about 900 since 2008.

The study also projected the current enrollment of 5,688 students will further drop by close to 300 students over the next seven years and roughly 200 more by 2034.

Hinckley said the financial loss to the corporation is about $8,600 per student.

Jerome McKibben, owner of the research firm, said La Porte mirrors a nationwide trend of fewer child births during a period of time when the population is aging.

"Even before the pandemic, we had four states and 800 counties in the U.S., 12 of them in Indiana, that had more deaths than births," he said during his Wednesday night presentation before the La Porte School Board.

Hinckley said the biggest reason for the loss of students here, though, is school of choice.

Since school of choice in Indiana began in 2011, the district has gained 240 students but lost 974 students with most of those choosing to attend school corporations at nearby South Central and New Prairie, she said.

Hinckley said offering more programs to try and lure additional students under school of choice might help some but restoring enrollment to what it once was could be very difficult given longstanding trends such as lack of growth in the area and lower birth rates.

She just started pouring through data contained in the study and other sources to help her decide what she feels is the best response.

Whatever she recommends, Hinckley said she doesn't believe more than one school building, if any, will need to close.

She said there is a need for staff reductions, but it was too early for her to speculate on the amount and where to make them.

Ultimately, the school board will have the final say on what to do to close the financial gap.

Hinckley said she hopes any decision to close a school and reduce staff is made no later than the April 15 meeting of the school board to give parents and employees time to prepare for change.

"If we would do nothing and continued on this path, at some point, we're going to have a problem. If we correct it now then we'll be o.k.," she said.

Hinckley, the schools superintendent in La Porte from 1989 to 2001, was brought in to replace Mark Francesconi after the school board announced his retirement.

Francesconi had been the superintendent since 2014.

Large housing development plan clears another hurdle

BY STAN MADDUX

One of the largest housing developments in recent memory in La Porte is inching its way closer to possible construction.

The over 30 acre wooded parcel on Park Street near the Thomas Rose Industrial Park was previously zoned for just single family homes.

The La Porte City Council unanimously approved a zoning change to also allow multi-family unit construction on the property Monday, March 3.

Park Street Community, LLC, has changed its original plans which called for 118 town homes and 19 more traditional single family dwellings when first presented to the council in early December.

The plan now consists of townhomes, 14 more traditional single family dwellings and 56 apartments inside four buildings.

La Porte Economic Advancement Partnership Executive Director Bert Cook said the homes available for purchase would still be priced from $340,000 to $405,000, as originally planned.

He said monthly rent for the two and three bedroom apartments has not been decided but should be anywhere from $1,000 to $2,000.

"As construction costs start to come in, it'll be more clear what the rents will be," he said.

Cook said apartments were added to the plans at the request of the city because of the need for additional modern rental units in the community.

The plan is to construct about a dozen or so homes then build a similar number again once the previous ones are sold.

"I want to emphasize, they're not going to be built all at once," he said.

The development is another step in the ongoing race by the current administration to modernize a housing stock built primarily before 1940.

Cook said people wanting to live here but going elsewhere for newer housing has been a longstanding problem that needs to be solved to grow the city's population.

The current population of about 22,000 has barely changed since 1960, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Mayor Tom Dermody said more housing choices are also important for keeping current residents looking to upgrade and drawing some of the 1,700 workers expected to be hired at the electric vehicle battery manufacturing plant going up outside New Carlisle.

He said it's almost like the city slammed the door on any new housing construction for decades and when that happens "you're going to get behind the eight ball and we're well beyond the eight ball."

About three months ago, the door opened for the project when the council approved an agreement with the developer to extend water and sewer lines to the site recently annexed by the city.

Dermody said "The Banks," consisting of 200 resort type apartments near Clear Lake, is one of several new housing developments completed since he became mayor in 2020.

Construction has started on many others while more housing developments are still in the design stage.

A study in 2022 recommended the city add more than 900 homes for ownership and over 750 rentals units over the next few years to achieve balance with a housing stock consisting of 20% of all homes built since 1980.

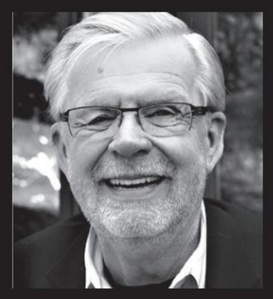
"We just had several conversations with a developer out of Evansville that wants to come in and look at more affordable housing in certain areas. We know we're in every level of need for housing," he said.

Cook said the next step is for the plans to undergo a site review where the developer and city department heads address any concerns.

He anticipates the start of construction later this year.

SPORTS

From the Bleachers



COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

The 2024 NFL scouting combine ended Sunday with many questions answered, but many more still unresolved.

For the second year in a row, the Bears have the first pick in the upcoming college draft, so for the second year in a row, everyone is waiting to see what they are going to do.

The combine is an opportunity for professional teams to scout young people who are finished with school and want to play in the NFL, but it is also a forum for teams and players to gather and talk.

This year, the consensus first pick in the upcoming draft, made it clear that if the Bears drafted him, he would be happy to come to Chicago and attempt to follow in the footsteps of other Chicago sports legends, like Walter Payton and Michael Jordan.

Caleb Williams is the name of this young man who has a chance to be a special quarterback. As anyone who follows the Bears knows, they have had a lot of special players over the years, but none of them were quarterbacks, and in this era, if you are lucky enough to have an exceptional quarterback playing for your team, your chances of winning the Super Bowl are greatly enhanced.

The Bears had the first pick last year, and traded it for a great receiver—a draft pick who turned out to be a really good offensive linemen, and future draft picks. One of those future picks turned out to be the first pick this year.

Personally, I don't think that the Bears will trade the pick this year.

Their current quarterback, Justin Fields, has a lot of potential and could end up being special, but Caleb Williams is being compared to Patrick Mahomes, currently the best in the business. Hopefully for the Bears, they will make the playoffs next season and they won't choose their player until the later part of the draft next year.

The NFL isn't perfect, but they sure do a lot of things right.

The culmination of the season is the Super Bowl and more people watch it on television than any other program. Free agency follows soon thereafter, then the draft. Training camp is next and all of a sudden a new season begins.

The league manages to keep fans interest for the entire year by carefully spreading out the events that are of interest to them.

Contrast that with baseball. When the World Series ends, speculation begins about who will enter free agency. Then, from November until March, lawyers and agents bring momentum to a standstill by having their players hold out for the last possible dollar.

I'm not sure why baseball doesn't enact a salary cap, but I think it would be beneficial for competitive balance and it would also pick up the pace of free agency.

Coretta Scott King said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

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Debbie Craig, Mary Robertson and Amy Goff enjoy homemade soup

Guests choose from the selection of bowls

Empty bowls were on display in the cafeteria

Annual Empty Bowls dinner is a community effort

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

For the second year in a row, New Buffalo High School's Empty Bowls dinner was a true community effort.

Sponsored by the high school's student senate, this year's 12th annual dinner, which was held Tuesday, Feb. 27, featured even more soups and and more ceramic bowls than the year before.

Created by The Imagine Render Group, Empty Bowls is an international grassroots movement to fight hunger. Proceeds from the high school's event benefited Blessings in a Backpack. Supported by Water's Edge United Methodist Church in New Buffalo, the program provides bags of food to students at New Buffalo Elementary School to sustain them over the weekend.

For a suggested $10 donation, guests could choose an empty bowl before filling a soup bowl with one of the soups that was made by Nicole Bowen's Foods and Nutrition class, high school staff and community members.

Ashley Jager, secondary art teacher, said that this year, they made close to 100 bowls, which was double the amount of last year's effort.

"We had everything from the middle/high school and then the community involved and kind of a team effort K-12 from the team instructors," she said.

Members of the high school's after-school Pottery Club hosted a "Pottery Madness" donation night, during which families and high school students came in and did all the bowls in one night, last fall. High school students could also drop in for the first two hours and hand-build a bowl, while the club's active members reserved wheels to throw bowls.

Beyond Pottery Club, three sessions of a community workshop, which were led by Jager and Erin Ledyard, elementary school art teacher, as well as the Pottery Club's teacher's assistant, senior Giada Pawlowski, were held in December. As a skill building exercise, sixth grade art students learned how to hand-build a pinch pot and monitor it through clay by making two ice cream dishes and donating one.

Hosting one night where the trimming and preparing of the bowls for Empty Bowls is done frees up students' hands to dive into more ceramic endeavors throughout the year.

"The pottery aspect all happens in the community workshop in the Madness Night and that way, they're not making a bowl every single year but they're learning how to make vases or how to make mugs or how to make origami dishes or weaves - so we took away the focus from a classroom assignment to after school," Jager said.

Active members in Pottery Club help out with community service throughout the year and reserve the wheels.

This year, Jager said students did a Raku field trip.

"So we're kind of expanding the skills of the ceramics club in New Buffalo," she added.

As a practicing artist and volunteer instructor at Long Beach Community Center, where she hosts a monthly community art workshop, Ledyard was glad to throw herself into this year's effort.

"I do air dry clay at the elementary level but I do know how to teach clay - I've taught ceramics before," she said.

Miss New Buffalo Audrey Proctor and Mr. New Buffalo Cameron Forker greet guests

Secondary art teacher Ashely Jager mingles with guests at the dinner

Secondary art teacher Ashley Jager poses with elementary art teacher Erin Ledyard

Kaitlyn Rainwater (right) serves soup to Frankie Biggs

Third princess contestant Jessie fields a question from Mya Thomas

Sixth contestant Bella takes the stage

Finley Boersma enjoys his crowning moment

Contestants open the pageant with a dance

Second contestant Natalie takes the stage

2024 Flag Day Prince and Princess, Finley Boersma and Hazel Bross

The contestants open the show with a dance number

Flag Day royalty crowned at The Acorn

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

A crowd of supporters turned up to see the youngest members of the community's royalty crowned at The Acorn Center for the Performing Arts in Three Oaks Sunday, March 3.

Hazel Bross and Finley Boersma, both 8, were crowned this year's Flag Day princess and prince in front of an audience of family and friends.

The daughter of Kimberley and Brandon Bross, Hazel is a second grader at River Valley Elementary who aspires to someday be a teacher.

She said her favorite part of Flag Day is collecting candy in the annual parade.

Upon being crowned, Hazel said she'd like to thank her mom and dad for "encouraging me to do this pageant."

The names of the other princess contestants were Brynn, Natalie, Jessie, Lily and Bella.

The son of Madison and Dallas Boersma, Finley is a second grader at Bridgman Elementary School whose goal is to be a Youtuber. His favorite part of the parade is throwing out all the candy and "maybe eating a few pieces."

"Really great" is how Finley described his crowning moment.

The names of other prince contestants were Grayson and Evan.

In addition to being cousins, Finley and Hazel have sat on royal courts: Hazel was Little Miss Three Oaks/River Valley 2023 and Finley was Little Mr. Bridgman 2023.

Finley and Hazel will have the opportunity to partake in all Flag Day events, including the 5K Saturday, June 8, and riding in the 72nd annual "World's Largest Flag Day Parade," which kicks off at 3 p.m. in downtown Three Oaks Sunday, June 9.

The royal duo will also be representing Three Oaks in the Memorial Day ceremony at Forest Lawn Cemetery.

Flay Day festivities will kick off in Three Oaks Friday, June 7, and continue throughout the weekend.

The annual Flag Day Hog Roast, which helps sustain the parade, will be from 5-8 p.m. Saturday, April 27, at the Three Oaks American Legion Post 204. Tickets for the event, which will feature music from the Resurrection Blues band and silent auction, are $20 and can be purchased from a Flag Day committee member beforehand or at the door.

Sunday's pageant was emceed by Miss and Mr. Three Oak/River Valley, Mya Thomas and DJ Freehling.

"Anyone who has been around for Flag Day festivities knows the importance of this holiday to this community... This is the time we come together to celebrate our town, our country, our flag and, most importantly, our veterans," Freehling, who was 2013 Flag Day Prince, said.

Judges were Lauren Wolf, Miss Baroda 2021, who's majoring in data science with a minor in entrepreneurship and innovation at Michigan State university;

Maura Killips, Miss Three Oaks/ River Valley 2022, who plans to graduate in May from Southwestern Michigan College with a degree in criminal justice before transferring to Western Michigan University to become a lawyer and Taylor Palmer, a junior at St. Mary's College, where she's studying science and communications and is a PH.D candidate seeking a degree in international affairs with a concentration in counterterrorism. The current Miss Southwest Michigan CInderrlll Woman, past pageant titles have included 2019 Miss Teen Lake Michigan and 2022 Miss Heart of Blossomtime.

Sponsors for the pageant were the Three Oaks American Legion and Journeyman Distillery. Harrington Photography will give Hazel and Finley a royal photo session.

Heather Whitlow, the co-organizer of Flag Day events, thanked The Acorn for hosting the pageant again.

"It's a really exciting experience for the kids to be up here onstage," she said.

First prince contestant Grayson takes the stage

Fourth contestant Lilly takes the stage

DJ Freehling asks third prince contestant Evan his onstage question

Finley Boersma waves to the audience

Hazel Bross takes the stage

Third princess contestant Jessie graces the stage

DJ Freehling chats with 2023 prince and princess, Braiden Boersma and Lily Jaspering

Mya Thomas asks first princess contestant Brynn a question

Judges Lauren Wolf, Taylor Palmer and Maura Killips

Princess contestants await the crowning

Mr. and Miss Three Oaks and River Valley DJ Freehling and Mya Thomas pose with Flag Day Prince and Princess, Finley Boersma and Hazel Bross

Students stand for a picture at the end of Tom Thelen's talk

Tom Thelen carries a backpack as part of a antibullying demonstration with the students

Tom Thelen gives students tools to combat bullying

BEING THE CHANGE

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Throughout his school years, Tom Thelen carried around a backpack that was brimming with secrets.

"I had a lot of hurt in my life and things that I carried around mentally and internally - as a metaphor, I had a lot of baggage," Thelen, one of America's top motivational speakers on mental health and bullying prevention, said to New Buffalo middle and high school students at the New Buffalo Performing Arts Center Tuesday, Feb. 27.

As young adults, Thelen said, it's the students' job to become responsible for how to react to the bullying: They can let it "own" them and keep it stuffed inside or they can tell a trusted adult at school or home.

"I think if you're honest with yourself you'll realize that everyone goes through something and I don't know what you've gone through but, whatever that stuff is, you have the choice of letting it weigh you down the rest of your life - pretending it's not there, all the while getting heavier, or, you can start to unpack that," he said.

Eventually, Thelen confided in a teacher, who helped smooth out the rough edges of his hurt.

While teachers may not be equipped with all the tools to take action, they can refer the problem to someone who can, such as a social worker or parent.

"There are times kids open up to you as a teacher when they wouldn't have opened up to someone else and you take the ball and run it down the field, which means towards their parents or toward their guardians or some type of mental health worker," he said.

Per a study done by the National Education Association, about 30% of sixth graders are bullied regularly, and about 15% of seniors still feel bullied regularly - which equates to three or four times a month.

Since the dawn of the digital age, a new bullying category has been added: cyberbullying. Noting that he and his wife didn't allow their children to own phones until the eighth grade, Thelen said that children can hurt themselves, even ending their own lives, over something that's viewed on their phones.

Not everything is bullying. Two good friends who put up with ribbing from each other, for example, is "fraternizing." It's when you take aim at someone's identity - whether it be their gender identity, the color of their skin or the shape of their body - that you cross the line.

Should they cross this line themselves, Thelen said there are ways students could remedy the situation: saying an authentic apology and avoiding deflection. If they witness bullying, they can "be the change" by confronting the bully.

Besides mental health professionals, Thelen said that students should accept that they have built-in help at home: their parents or, as Thelen said, their "default trusted adults."

"I think one of the hardest things about being a teen is having imperfect parents, who have to hold you accountable to your actions, and the hardest part of being a parent is having imperfect teens," he said.

Thelen said that the biggest way to combat bullying is choosing how it'll affect you: letting it get you down "and stay down," like a rock, or bouncing back from it, like a bouncy ball.

"The people who bounce back realize someone else's opinion of me doesn't have to become my opinion of me…Someone else might've hurt me at the beginning of the day but it doesn't have to hurt me the rest of the day," Thelen said.

Besides the middle/high school, Thelen also spoke at the elementary school and to parents that evening.

New Buffalo Area Schools Superintendent Adam Bowen said that one of his goals when he became superintendent last summer was to form the current bullying task force team, which is representative of administrators, teachers, SROs and New Buffalo Area Schools Board of Education members Vannessa Thun and Greg Vosberg.

""As I was interviewing for the position, the board said that this was one of the concerns that was brought to them is that there was bullying happening at the school - specifically, the problem was that kids didn't feel comfortable to report it," Bowen said.

Bowen said that one of the drivers for choosing Thelen' program was that it comes with The Report Bullying app, which students can download on their phones to report bullying anonymously, as well as a curriculum with Thelen speaking.

He got together with the district's "wellness team," social worker Hilary Cuningham, Tiffany Peter, the middle school social worker and Angela Robertson, the elementary school counselor, last summer to discuss launching the program.

Once a week during advisory time at the middle /high school, students watched videos and teachers would have discussions on topics that ranged from the definition of bullying to resilience.

Per the post survey, Bowen said that, other than working on when to be an upstander in the face of bullying, the school has experienced "nice growth" in terms of its overall culture.

"One of the areas that really stuck out to me is we have a proper channel on how to report bullying in this school - that was clear that from this, now we really have established that," he said.

For more on Thelen, including his book, "Mental Health 101 for Teens," an Amazon #1 New Release, visit www.tomthelen.com.

New Buffalo High School Principal Tracy Ripley thanks Tom Thelen for coming

Tom Thelen discusses the quadrants of mental health

Tom Thelen shares anti-bullying strategies with students

Effort to increase poultry exports includes soybean grower

BY STAN MADDUX

A southwest Michigan soybean producer was part of an effort to increase U.S. poultry exports during an event in the Middle East where over 190 countries were represented.

Sara Trattles was among the representatives from the Michigan Soybean Committee attending Gulfood, the world's largest annual food, beverage and hospitality show in the United Arab Emirates.

Her trip to the nation's capital of Dubai was through a partnership between MSC and the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council.

There were more than 5,500 major global exhibitors at the show attended by nearly 150,000 people.

Trattles said the main purpose of the trip was to showcase how valuable Michigan soybeans are to the U.S. poultry industry in order to increase U.S. poultry exports to countries represented at the annual Feb. 19-23 event.

Trattles said more U.S. poultry exports would mean higher demand for soybeans.

According to MSC, poultry eats over 60% of the soybean meal produced in the U.S. as feed for livestock.

"If we can do something within our state to help exports then it's kind of a win for all of us," she said.

Another reason for the trip was to see the MSC sponsored show pavilion, which hosted a record 18 exhibiting members working to promote exports of U.S. poultry products.

The pavilion is also where many meetings were held between representatives of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service and other industry leaders along with stakeholders from other countries such as India.

According to MSC, the emphasis of the talks was how the U.S. can position themselves as providers of high quality poultry products able to meet the needs for buyers from around the globe.

Trattles said one of the many things she learned was how important the packaging of poultry is to exports.

For example, how packaged chicken quarters look after delivery from the U.S., Brazil or some other country has influence in choosing a foreign poultry or meat provider.

"Sometimes it doesn't look so pleasant," she said.

As a result, Trattles said MSC and Michigan State University are discussing the possibility of doing a study about the packaging of food to try and gain more of an edge in the global competition.

"We're in talks. Nothing is committed yet," she said.

Trattles, 45, said there were also displays for the beef, lamb and dairy sectors of the industry but not so much for pork since that choice of meat isn't as popular in that region of the world.

Other foods showcased included snack meats, nuts and dried fruit.

She was taken back somewhat by the different cultures reflected at the event along with an exhibit of meat from Russia, which made her think about the devastation from the ongoing military conflict between that nation and Ukraine.

Trattles said among the type of foods she discovered included halal and kosher, which have to be made, produced, processed, manufactured and stored to the specifications under Islamic law.

She spent two days at the five day event mostly learning and doing some light promoting of Michigan soybeans.

Trattles grew up on a farm raising mostly corn and soybeans in Dowagiac.

She studied agricultural science and agricultural business at Michigan State University then worked for MSU extension for five years.

During that period, Trattles met her future husband, who now operates the corn and soybean farm he grew up on in Colon, roughly 40 miles east from where she was raised.

She now works at the Schoolcraft branch of GreenStone Farm Credit Services, which offers things like farm loans at close to 40 locations throughout Michigan and northeast Wisconsin.

"I've been to a lot of trade shows but nothing quite that big. It was interesting to see the international experience," she said.

OBITUARIES

Joyce Grant
1938-2024

Joyce Grant, 85, formerly of New Buffalo, MI, passed away on Thursday – February 29, 2024, at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman, MI. Arrangements have been entrusted to Sommerfeld Chapel – 15 N. Barton St., New Buffalo, MI.

]Joyce was born on Dec. 22, 1938 in Shelbyville, IN, to the late John and Leah (Burns) Buell.

On Feb. 11, 1961 in Anderson, IN she married Paul Grant; he preceded her in death in 2005. Joyce was secretary in New Buffalo High School for 27 years. She was enthusiastic in supporting all of the school events, especially all sports. Joyce also attended many shows, concerts, figure skating events with her friends from the Michigan City Senior Center. She also enjoyed Elvis and going to Las Vegas.

Joyce is survived by her children – Bob Grant of Buchanan, Dean (Denise) Grant of Cape Coral, FL and Cathleen (Dan) Grant-Young of Three Oaks; grandchildren – Jason (Melissa) Grant, Leah (Nickolas) Zuccarelli, Danny Young, David (Kimberley) Hudson, Matthew (Gabrielle) Grant and Joshua (Ashley) Young; seven great grandchildren; and a sister – Susan (Mike) Johnson. Preceding Joyce in death are two brothers – Butch Buell and John Farmer.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held on Monday, March 11, 3:00pm, at the Sommerfeld Chapel in New Buffalo, with Pastor Kel Penny officiating. Burial will follow at Pine Grove Cemetery in New Buffalo. Visitation with the family precedes the service from 1:00-3:00pm at the funeral home. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Diabetes Association. Friends wishing to leave the family a message of condolence may do so at www.sommerfeldchapel.com.

New Buffalo Times
LOCAL INTELLIGENCE
— SINCE 1942 —

A Day in the Life
MORNING THOUGHTS
BY LAWRENCE VON EBELER

John:

I was just thinking about you.

I was thinking that, if you lived here, we could go out to breakfast and maybe have pancakes with maple syrup that's made here. Then we could critique the décor and totally renounce it.

Which reminds me, my friend: Patsy opened a little cafe and she served the breakfast to end all breakfasts! She had a display of her pastries starting just inside the door. So, you're standing and waiting for a table and reading the New York Times, trying to ignore the beautiful pastries and always ending up ordering some - or eating it right there, like you're starving. Patsy sold the restaurant to someone a couple years ago and they ran it into the ground and sold it. The second owners did the same thing and sold it. Now, it's been torn down and leveled. Patty died this year and I'm glad she didn't see the demise of her darling, successful restaurant.

After a faubulous breakfast, we could go antiqueing, with my favorite second hand store being our first stop. I could go there every day and find great things. Everything is super cheap and you would be a disgrace if you paid the asking price. I love the place because for one thing, it has an exclusive supplier, with the wealthy lake people dumping their expensive throwaways there (you pay almost nothing for whatever you say). They only recently started charging for the clothes. I have gotten so much from there: double breasted polo suits, blasers in cashmere and shoes. There're also things for any room in the house (you know that I never walk out of there without an armload).

That would not be the only stop, as there are many, many other antique stores - that would be part of the day. Next would be lunch time. I'd recommend the "Getaway," an old bar and restaurant that now caters to older couples, with the best food you ever ate for the money (or otherwise).

I just framed another picture of myself. I don't know where it was shot, or when, because I can't tell what age I was; however, I was older than my 20s. I don't know why I want to keep it; it's not very good, probably because it's old.

There is a commercial on the TV, where someone's speaking her role for the vitamins that are so popular. You spend a fortune on them, and there are new ones every week. I was asked if I'd like to be fixed up with the woman who's featured in the latest commerical. I declined because I thought she was too old for me. She was married to a star football player and divorced a couple years prior...I think her first name is Joan. You just returned the call from me and I had nothing to say; however, Olive just came and she's fixing me soup for lunch: Campbell tomato soup, with crackers to dunk into the soup (of course). I love those two combined. Of course, there's also Sweet and Low in the soup.

Olive is such a fast shopper! I gave her a reduced shopping list because I

bought a new/old chandelier from the second hand store. It's not really a chandelier because it has no arms with candle holders. It's one piece of

giamt frosted glass being held by art deco hardware and a very cool pipe - the whole thing is cool. I shouldn't have spent the money, but I bought it anyway! It was $30 and on sale for $15! I felt guilty, since it's worth at least $1,500 or much more! I have never seen one like it! I'll do a sketch of it, which, since it was just lying on the floor in pieces, might be kind of hard to do.

Olive just brought me all of my favorite things to eat and drink: diet Pepsi, potato chips with cheese, patties from York mints in little silver bags. I could not decide what to eat first! Sick, I know - it's sick! "Yummy yum!" I said to Olive. "It's like a party, with all of what I love the most - all at once!"

HOROSCOPE

MARCH 7-13, 2024

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

The energy coming your way this week is all about recuperating and rejuvenating. Use this energy to its fullest by pulling back and focusing on quiet time. Continual pushing is not the answer now. Refrain from getting wrapped up in other people's issues; focus on peace and solitude.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

It is time to make some new connections socially. Being around people is just what you need this week. Be open hearted and make time to relax and enjoy life with people. Move away from domineering attitudes and recognize your own need to control so, you can truly engage with others.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

Don't shy away from challenges now. Trust in your abilities and know that you have all the will power necessary to tackle any problem or vice. The Universe may throw you some punches but nothing you can't learn to block the next time around. So, buck up; everything comes in pairs for Gemini.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

There is a real desire to explore and move out away from routines this week. This is the time to expand your talents and acquire some new skills by taking a class or taking a new approach to an old issue. Expand your view but don't sacrifice the lessons you learned from past experiences.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

Use your healing energy wisely this week. Recognize that there needs to be a balanced give and take within your interactions. Without that balance there is a risk of feeling taken for granted. Be sure you show appreciation for what you receive and in turn receive acknowledgment for your services.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

This is the time to establish a solid foundation of honestly and respect in all of your collaborations and relationships. Set the parameters of your partnership in ways that accentuates the strengths of each individual involved. Acknowledge who does what better and use that as your primary guide.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

The vibe coming your way this week is all about getting yourself established in a new position at work or within a team. Really evaluate your current position in relation to your abilities. Perhaps, there is a lot more you could be earning and moving towards if, you applied yourself more.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

Reach out to those younger relatives and your children this week. Perhaps, it is time to take on an apprentice and share your skills. Take time to teach and expand on concepts that have helped you move forward in life. Ask them their perception on things as well, get them talking.

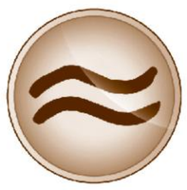
SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

This week it is important to nurture your home environment and focus on creating a place of sustenance and peace. Your work place could be very hectic and draining now. It is important to leave the negativity at the door and open your heart to new experiences with family and your homelife.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

It's time to diversify and establish a new niche for yourself. Get out of established routines and start implementing new practices. Start engaging talents and ideas that you may have put placed on the back burner or let stagnate. Get your passions reignited and take those calculated risks.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



Know that you have a lot to offer and that your perspective is quite valuable this week. Don't sell you or your ideas short. This is the time to make your mark and show off your skills while, being properly compensated. Let your talents and abilities pay off. Don't shy away from challenges now.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

This is the week to advocate for yourself and push for the things you want. Communicate with people more and speak up when, you see there is a way you can affect situations for the better. Don't shy away from opportunities to help or show others the proper way to do things.

Every man is guilty of all the good he did not do.
— Voltaire

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

	3	9	7			1		8
		7		6			3	
2	8						6	
		1	6	9			5	
	7	5						9
	1					2		
			9		4	7		6
		8				3		

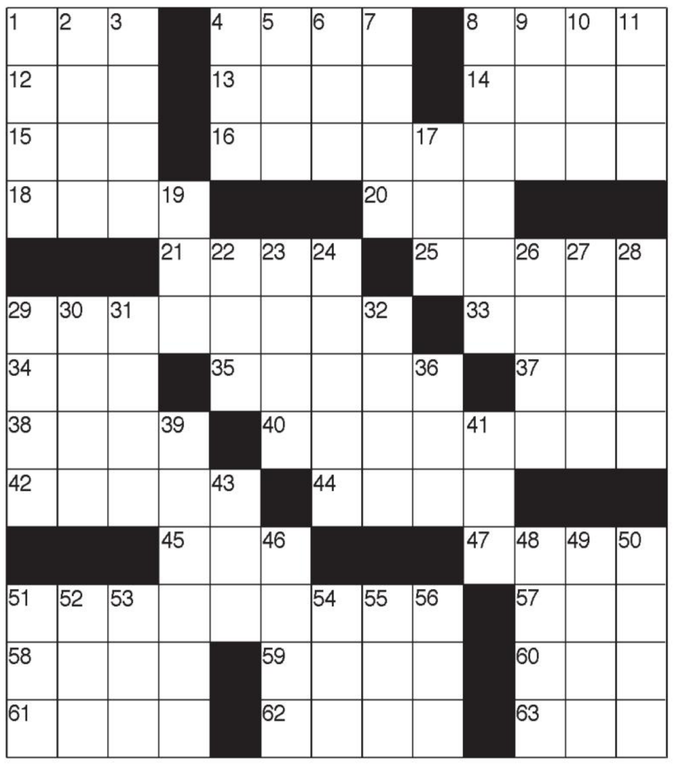
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Instrument Landing System (abbr.)
4 Sliced cabbage
8 Swabs
12 Day of the week (abbr.)
13 Hit on the head
14 Noun-forming (suf.)
15 Centigram (abbr.)
16 Stench
18 Chin. dynasty
20 No way!
21 Policemen
25 Keyboard musical instrument
29 Ivory color
33 Regrets
34 Length over all (abbr.)
35 Delay
37 Dative (abbr.)
38 Government (abbr.)
40 Cerine
42 Fictitious name
44 Coral islands
45 Pluck wool by hand
47 Use swear words
51 Dodge
57 Pan American Union (abbr.)
58 Amer. Civil Liberties Union (abbr.)
59 Bush
60 Tons per day (abbr.)
61 Leaves of water lilies
62 Move quickly
63 Office of Strategic Services (abbr.)

DOWN

1 Restless desire
2 Affectation
3 Half (pref.)
4 Standard cubic foot (abbr.)
5 Love (Scot.)
6 Atl. standard time (abbr.)
7 Furze
8 Monument stone
9 Not multifold
10 Personal computers
11 His (Fr.)
17 Dip
19 Alternating continuous waves (abbr.)
22 Exclamations of delight
23 Pocket bread
24 Hunting game stealthily
26 German auto
27 Clean
28 Bone: Gr.
29 Saint of the Russ. Orthodox Church
30 Deception
31 Hexagonal tiles
32 She (Fr.)
36 Ballad
39 Ankle
41 Nat'l Security Council (abbr.)
43 Bean
46 Cricket field parts
48 Till (2 words)
49 Drains
50 Beer
51 Father
52 Fiddler crab genus
53 Sealed (abbr.)
54 Office of Economic Development (abbr.)
55 Money of Anglo-Saxon England
56 Explosive



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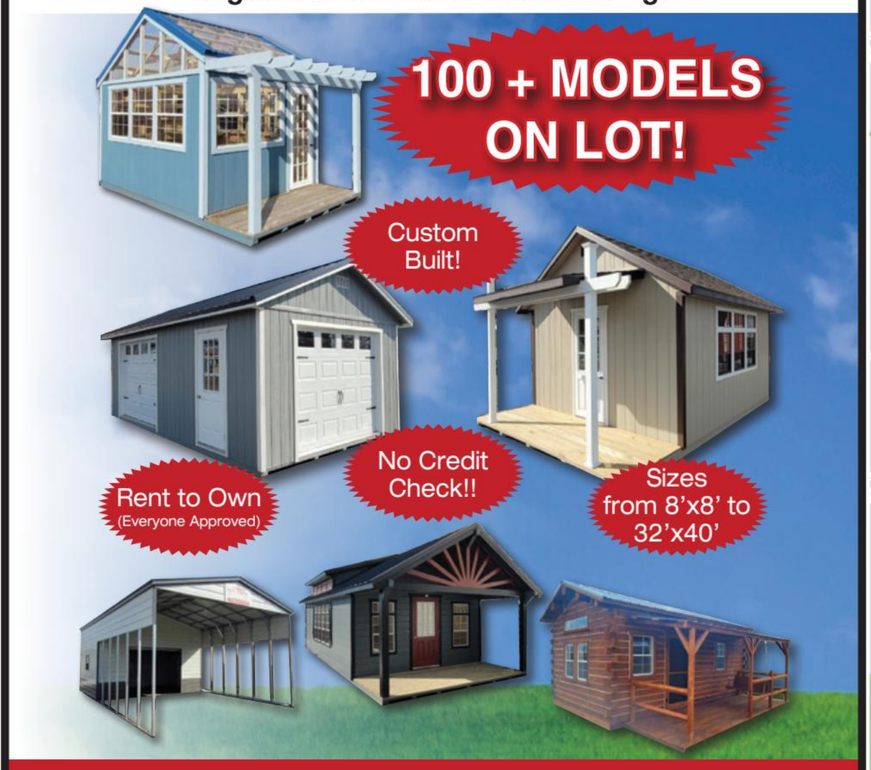

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PRE-KINDERGARTEN, KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP TAKING PLACE AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

It's time to start planning for the 2024-25 school year at New Buffalo Area Schools

New Buffalo Area Schools is looking for students for the Bison Beginners Pre-Kindergarten program and kindergarten students for the 2024-2025 school year.

It is helpful for the district to know how many students there will be to begin planning for the 2024-2025 school year. If you believe your child will qualify for either the Bison Beginners pre-kindergarten program or for kindergarten, please contact the office at 269-469-6060 to ensure your student is on the enrollment list. You can also email the office staff at jwendel@nbas.org or rbowen@nbas.org. Please contact the office by Monday, April 8. You will need to include information such as your child's name, birth date, parent/guardian name, address, phone number and email address. The necessary paperwork/processes for completion will also be provided.

Parents/guardians that have children who will be 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2024, and are residents of the New Buffalo Area School District are welcome to register their child for the Bison Beginners Pre-Kindergarten program. The program offers both half-day (a.m.) or full-day sessions. At this time, information is only being taken on students that currently reside within the school district. Enrollment is limited to 25 students for the Bison Beginners program.

Parents/guardians with students that will be 5 years old by Sept. 1, 2024, and are residents of the New Buffalo Area School District are welcome to register their child for the full-day kindergarten program. At this time, information is only being taken on students that currently reside within the school district.

Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students attending New Buffalo Elementary for the 2024-2025 school year will be able to have their mandatory hearing, vision and dental screening by the Berrien County Health Department from noon to 1 p.m. Monday, May 20, at New Buffalo Elementary.

If you need a hearing/vision/dental screening for your child who will be attending New Buffalo Elementary and you are not available May 20, please contact the Berrien County Health Department at 269-926-7121 extension 5293 to schedule an appointment or visit their website (www.berriencounty.org/634/Hearing-Vision-Screening).

New Buffalo's family-owned Ghost Isle Brewery reopening in time for St. Patrick's Day weekend

Ghost Isle Brewery's grand reopening for the 2024 season will happen St Patrick's Day weekend.

The brewery will be open from noon to 10 p.m. Friday through Saturday, March 15 and 16 (the kitchen will be open until 9 p.m) and from noon to 8 p.m. Sunday, March 17.

Ghost Isle is excited to announce a new chef at the helm: Shawn Ward, who will debut his talents over the festive weekend of St. Patrick's Day.

Ghost Isle will be reopening with a limited menu and will be featuring a traditional corned beef and cabbage dish, while the bar will be offering Irish drink specials.

A live music lineup will include Kyla Webb & the Miniskirt from 6-9 p.m. March 15. For Pete's Sake will perform from 6-9 p.m. March 16. There will be no cover charge.

Ghost Isle Brewery is located at 17684 US-12 in New Buffalo.

— STAFF REPORTS

TROTOM to screen 'Mustang Magic' at The Vickers Theatre

Since playoff basketball is here, The Region of Three Oaks Museum will be presenting a look back at some of the glory days of River Valley High School basketball by screening the film "Mustang Magic: When Every Friday Night Mattered" at 7 p.m. Friday, March 15, at the Vickers Theatre.

Produced by RVHS alum Mark Behnke, the film focuses on basketball teams of the 1970s and '80s that either won a state championship or came heartbreakingly close. After the film, Behnke and players from some of those teams will be on hand to answer questions and swap stories.

Admission is just $5 for museum members, with the Vickers' regular pricing for nonmembers. For $20, a membership and a movie ticket can be purchased. Advance tickets can be purchased at www.vickerstheatre.easy-ware-ticketing.com or at the door.

The Region of Three Oaks Museum is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and presenting local history. The museum will reopen on Friday, May 3. — STAFF REPORTS

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Free family concert to feature "Dueling Divas"

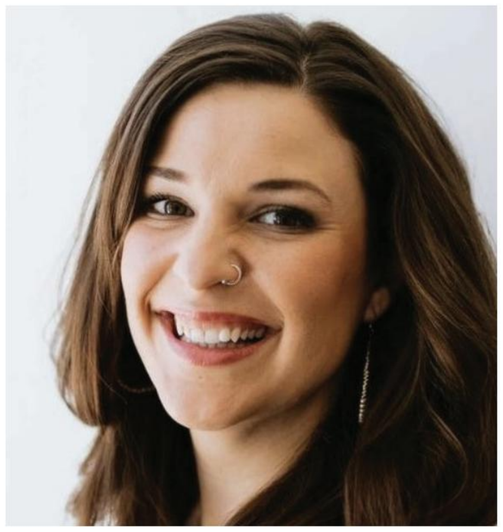
The School of American Music (SAM) will present a free family concert, "Dueling Divas," at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 17, at the Episcopal Church of the Mediator, 14280 Red Arrow Highway, in Harbert.

Admission to the concert is free, but a food item donation for non-profit Neighbor by Neighbor is requested.

The concert will feature sopranos Rebecca Selvidge and Carrie VanDenburgh, spanning jazz, musical theater, and classical and Maggie Martin, who will accompany them on piano.

Rebecca Selvidge

Carrie VanDenburgh



Maggie Martin

Selvidge and VanDenburgh are members of Three Divas, a singing group that performs throughout the Southwest Michigan area, and they have extensive performance experience in many different venues. VanDenburgh is the choir director at Berrien Springs Middle and High School, where she teaches seven ensembles, and is the choir director at Harbert Community Church. Selvidge is the director of choral music and music lecturer at Lake Michigan College. She also performs as a singer with the Lake Effect Jazz Big Band. Martin is a classically trained pianist and has extensive experience as an accompanist. She is the choir director of the Harbor Country Singers, SAM's community choir, and is a small business owner in Harbert.

More information can be found at www.lakeeffectjazz.org for Selvidge and at www.berriensprings-choirs.weebly.com for VanDenburgh.

The SAM Family Concert Series is in its sixth season and is made possible by a grant from the Pokagon Fund and donations to the non-profit School of American Music. This is the first of three free family concerts this year.

For more information, contact SAM at 269-409-1191 or schoolofamericanmusic@gmail.com or visit School of American Music on Facebook or the website www.schoolofamericanmusic.com.

— STAFF REPORTS

'March Experience' to give tutorial on tick tubes, how to prevent spread of Lyme Disease

The ecological balance in Union Pier is under threat, with rising tick populations and declining quail populations causing concern among local residents and environmentalists. In response, Goldberry Woods would like to invite you from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 16, to a transformative experience designed to educate the community on local ecology, tick management, and the crucial role of quails in maintaining the environmental balance.

The March Experience will aim to address the growing disconnect between the community and the natural world, whihc has been exacerbated by rising fears of tick-borne diseases and a general decline in local wildlife populations. This unique event will combine education, hands-on activities and mindfulness practices to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of our natural surroundings.

Event highlights willinclude:

- Educational Sessions: Experts in ecology and wildlife management will provide insights into the current environmental challenges and the importance of tick management.
- Quail Conservation: Participants will learn about the significance of quails in tick control and ecosystem balance, with a focus on raising and caring for these birds as a method of natural tick prevention and native restoration.
- Interactive Workshops: Attendees will participate in a tick-tube workshop, offering practical solutions for tick management in their own backyards.
- Nature Immersion Activities: The event features a walking meditation, an edge of the woods walk, and a guided tour of our quail aviary, encouraging participants to reconnect with nature and overcome the fear of outdoor activities.
- Refreshments and Networking: A trail mix bar, along with tea, coffee and water, will be available to foster community interaction and discussion.

"The March Experience is more than just a workshop; it's a call to action for our community to engage actively in restoring and preserving the delicate balance of our local ecosystem. We're bringing people together to learn, share, and contribute to a sustainable future," Julie Haberichter, innkeeper/owner of Goldberry Woods, said.

Participants will also receive a spray bottle of tick repellent as a token of appreciation and a reminder of the practical skills learned during the event. There's a $10 suggested donation and tick-tubes will be available for sale.

For additional details and to RSVP, visit www.ombralunare.com/event-details-registration/quail-ticks-lyme. — STAFF REPORTS

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